



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 24, 2010

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BROOKLYN MAN SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR ILLEGALLY TRANSMITTING CASH TO RABBI AND COOPERATING WITNESS

TRENTON, N.J. – A Brooklyn, N.Y., man was sentenced today to 18 months in prison for operating illegal money transmitting businesses that transferred large amounts of cash to a cooperating witness and Rabbi Eliahu Ben Haim, the then-principal rabbi of Congregation Ohel Yaacob in Deal, New Jersey, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Schmuel Cohen (a/k/a Schmulik Cohen), 25, a citizen of Israel, pleaded guilty in April before United States District Judge Joel A. Pisano to an Information charging him with operating unlicensed money transmitting businesses, or “cash houses,” out of locations in Brooklyn. Judge Pisano also imposed the sentence today in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: from June 2007 to July 2009, Cohen operated an unlicensed money transmitting business with individuals residing in Israel. In conducting business from locations in Brooklyn, he, along with co-conspirators Yeshaye Ehrental and Akiva Aryeh Weiss, transferred thousands of dollars in cash to Ben Haim and a cooperating witness who was acting for Ben Haim. Cohen admitted that, during the relevant period, he transferred between \$400,000 and \$1 million.

Ehrental and Weiss pleaded guilty in April to a charge each of operating an unlicensed money transmitting business and are scheduled to be sentenced in November. Ben Haim, also scheduled for sentencing in November, pleaded guilty in June to a count of money laundering conspiracy.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Pisano sentenced Cohen to a year of supervised release.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, and special agents of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Victor W. Lessoff, for the investigation leading to today’s guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Maureen Nakly of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Patrick J. Egan, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa.